

Catherine M. Cameron. *Captives: How Stolen People Changed the World* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2016, 213pp., 10 illustr., ISBN 978-0-8032-9399-1)

This book will be an eye-opener for archaeology. It presents a global but contextualized analysis and interpretation of evidence for the role played by captives in small-scale (i.e. 'nonstate') societies. And this role was not a minor one: from ten to thirty percent of the population in such societies were made up of captives, most of them women and children. Cameron draws from ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and historical sources to provide a contextualized, yet comparative anthropological framework for understanding the widespread phenomenon of taking captives in small-scale societies around the world. *Captives* presents both single cases of individual fates, as well as data from a global survey spanning from complex hunter-gatherers through tribal societies to chiefdoms. It summarizes ten years of research into the topic, and is preceded by a series of influential publications (Cameron, 2008; 2011).

Chapter 1, 'Captives in Space, Time, and Mind', provides a historical discussion of warfare and its relation to captive taking in small-scale societies, and the prevalence of captive taking and slavery across the world until very recently, also in state level societies (e.g. slaves made up to twenty-five per cent of England's population, as reported in the Domesday Book census in AD 1086). The chapter also defines the different relevant categories, from war-captives to slaves and slave raiding for commercial markets, which mostly represents a different category that is part of a more recent phenomenon.

'Captive Taking in Global Perspective' (Ch. 2), provides a global overview of the mechanisms of captive taking, covering in more detail the North American regions, but also tackling, even if superficially,

South America, Africa, Europe, and the islands of Southeast Asia. In small-scale societies, captives were primarily taken to provide labor, and they were mostly women and sometimes children, while males were killed when possible in order to prevent revenge. Raids for captive taking were also normally carried out outside one's own ethnic group.

Chapter 3, discusses 'The Captive as a Social Person', that is, how the social identity of the captive is constructed as they enter the captor's society. It has great relevance to archaeology, as captives often brought new skills to the society they entered. However, they were subordinate, and mostly owned by wealthy, chiefly lineages, but they could change their status and identity through life, as could then their children. A fascinating story about a captive, Helena Valero, Napagnuma ('white woman' or 'foreign woman') of the Yanomamö is then told. Her fate illustrates the often experienced phenomenon that to become abducted is stigmatizing and prevents social acceptance in your original community if you succeed to return. After twenty years of capture among various groups where she had been the wife of several powerful chiefs, and had two children, she succeeded to escape back to her own 'white' community. Only to realize that she and her children were not accepted, and she ended living among other Indians near a mission to survive.

Chapter 4, 'Captives and the Creation of Power', describes how captives and the raids conducted to take them, as well as their labor, helped to accelerate processes of power acquisition and competition among chiefly lineages and their warrior groups. Captives also represented wealth,

and were as such status symbols in addition to providing labor (which also created wealth, without reciprocal demands), and they could be transferred or sold in internal transactions as well.

In 'Captives, Social Boundaries, and Ethnogenesis' (Ch. 5), Cameron discusses the roles of captives in the shaping of social boundaries and ethnogenesis. Most raids were carried out outside one's own ethnic group, and, thus, raids for captive-taking supported internal ethnic solidarity and allowed the demonization of the raided groups, justifying both killings and the subordinate role of captives. However, captives would also bring knowledge from these 'others' into the captors' society, thus promoting cultural transmission and change. This chapter has direct relevance for archaeological discussions of different forms of material/cultural identities and their role in prehistory. Chapter 6 explores the role of captives in cultural transmission. It starts with a discussion of the various mechanisms usually employed to account for cultural transmission, from skills to institutions, and then proceeds to demonstrate the important role of captives in such processes when it comes to craft production, food, and religious innovations (also discussing case studies from state-level societies). Their skills (e.g. competence in more than one language) would also make them important intermediaries in negotiations with other tribes. Thus, we have here a perhaps overlooked mechanism of cultural transmission, in addition to the more prestige-good-related transmissions as described by Mary W. Helms (1988).

The final chapter, 'Captives in Prehistory' (Ch. 7), discusses the implications of the results of Cameron's cross-cultural study for prehistory, and importantly how to possibly identify captives in the archaeological record. Captives tend to be invisible, but can possibly be identified through their role as agents of cultural

change, in combination with more concrete evidence, such as diet differences and how they relate to strontium isotopes of origin (Sjögren, Price & Kristiansen, 2016), osteological signatures of physical conditions through life, and finally through the use of more informal or deviating burial customs. However, perhaps even as intriguing, the book provides a framework for understanding the role of low-level recurring warfare and raiding in small-scale societies around the world. This chapter has clear implications also for prehistoric societies, since it is notoriously difficult to trace archaeologically, although the arrival of stable isotope and aDNA analysis has helped us to define non-locals and untangle ancestry. A considerable number of mass-burials or just informal burials have emerged during the last thirty years due to large scale rescue archaeology projects that uncover areas outside normal cemeteries and also in settlements. Thus, given the usual low visibility of such phenomena we can assume that such killings and their informal burials were rather common and, perhaps also the taking of captives. The evidence shows two basic patterns: one of massive killing of a whole community to take over their land, and another of selective killing of males, with the abduction of women and children (Spatzier, 2017). Not least the latter form may have been dominant, but we need more research that combines archaeological, osteological analyses of trauma, and science-based evidence from aDNA and strontium isotopes to unwind these complex relationships (Schulting & Fibiger 2014; Schroeder et al., 2019).

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Guy D. Middleton. *Understanding Collapse: Ancient History and Modern Myths* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xx and 441pp., 28 Illustr., 16 tables, 18 maps, pbk, ISBN. 978-1-316-60607-0)

There is something about the fall of past societies that captures the minds of observers and interpreters. The Romans of the Republic carried with them the memory of the Gallic sack of the city in the fourth century BC, and their own near demise at the hands of their enemies. They traced their roots back to Hercules, to Romulus, and importantly to a lost prince of Troy. They stitched their identity to Aeneas, to the Greek myth, and to the fall of Ilium. Medieval writers, living amongst the colossal ruins of empire, wondered what could bring such a world to its knees, and trace their own futures and fears through the lens of imperial demise, largesse, and religious failings. Modern commentators are no different. Every discussion of the fall of empires, states, kingdoms, and nations reflects contemporary concerns not just about the present, but also about the shadowy future that could yet be. It is no

surprise that, in recent years, climate change, over-industrialisation, and geological disasters have loomed large in modern depictions of ancient destructions (e.g Rome and the Maya). Where once it was religious discord, disharmony, or heretical belief that undermined states, now, more often it is human greed, exploitation, and disregard for ecological balance, such as in Harper (2017). Whenever we study the demise of past societies, through whatever lens we can find, we must bear in mind it says as much about us, and the world we inhabit, as it does about the ancient past.

A textbook that looks at ‘collapse’ and brings together a variety of different case studies is a most welcome endeavour; and, moreover, one that recognises the modern narratives guiding discussions of demise and fall. Middleton notes that ‘[c]ollapse stories appeal to our narrative desires [...]